

**Testimony of John Gagnon
Owner, John Gagnon's Pet Resort
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**In Support of Senate Bill 274 –
An Act Prohibiting the Unreasonable Confinement and Tethering of Dogs
Joint Environment Committee
March 8, 2010**

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and fellow Environment Committee members, thank you for this opportunity to express my **strong support for Senate Bill 274.**

In 2003, Connecticut became the first state to attempt to regulate the practice of excessively chaining or confining a dog. Not only is dog chaining inhumane, but chained dogs also pose a public safety hazard.

Sadly, most animal control officers do not enforce the Connecticut law because they consider its mandate not to tether or confine a dog "for an unreasonable period of time" to be too vague.

In fact, State ACO Dean Gates informed me that he only considers the current law enforceable when a dog has died as a result of being tethered. The Griswold CT ACO, Larry Proux, informed me that he does not attempt to enforce that law either. Both officer Gates and Proux notified me of this in response to a neighbor of mine who confines her two dogs 24 hours per day either in small cages in her garage, or tied out on 15' leads.

SB 274 will ensure enforcement of the dog tethering and confinement law by clarifying the conduct that it prohibits. Among other things, SB 274 will require that confined dogs have sufficient space (i.e., 100 square feet for one dog, 50 square feet for each additional dog), and that dogs are not tethered in a way that endangers them or prevents their either reaching their food, water, or shelter, or comfortably lying down, sitting, or standing.

The ASPCA and CT Votes for Animals have worked closely with Connecticut animal control officers to develop the language of SB 274.

Please support SB 274 and the amendments proposed by the ASPCA and CT Votes for Animals. This bill is critically needed to protect neglected animals and our community as chaining dogs is associated with dog aggression and biting. In fact, according to one researcher, chained dogs were responsible for 25% (or 109) of U.S. dog bite fatalities from 1965-2008. Of these fatalities, 99 were children who wandered into the reach of a chained dog, and another 11 were instances in which chained dogs broke free before attacking.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify and I strongly urge you to support this important piece of legislation.